

THE CASE

OF

Indifferent Things

Used in the

WORSHIP of GOD,

Proposed and Stated, by con-
sidering these QUESTIONS,

Qu. I. Whether things Indifferent, though not Prescribed,
may be Lawfully used in Divine Worship? [or,
Whether there be any things Indifferent in the
Worship of God?]

Qu. II. Whether a Restraint of our Liberty in the use of
such Indifferent things be a Violation of it?

L O N D O N,

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A Continuation and Vindication of the Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation, in Answer to Mr. Baxter, and Mr. *&c.*

Considerations of present use, concerning the Danger Resulting from the Change of our Church-Government.

1. Perswasive to Communion with the Church of England.

2. The Resolution of some Cases of Conscience, which Respect Church-Communion.

3. The Case of Indifferent things, used in the Worship of God, Proposed and Stated, by considering these Questions, *&c.*

4. A Discourse about Edification.

5. The Resolution of this Case of Conscience, *Whether the Church of England's Separation is a separation in substance, when the Roman makes it a separation in form.*

6. A Letter to Anonymus, in Answer to his Three Letters to Dr. Sherlock about Church-Communion.

7. Certain Cases of Conscience resolved, concerning the Lawfulness of joyning with Forms of Prayer in Publick Worship. In two Parts.

8. The Case of mixt Communion. Whether it be Lawful to separate from a Church upon the Account of promiscuous Congregations, and Mixt Communion.

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10. The Case of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, Stated and Resolved. The first Part.

11. Certain Cases of Conscience, *&c.* The Second Part.

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13. A Serious Remonstrance, with some Important Advices, Relating to the late Cases about Conformity, Recommended to the present Dissenters from the Church of England.

14. An Argument for Union, *&c.*

15. The Case Kneeling at the Sacrament. The Second Part.

16. Some Considerations about the Case of Scandals, or giving Offence to Weak Brethren.

17. The Church of England Baptists in five Questions, *&c.*

18. A Discourse about the charge of Popery upon the Reformed Church of England, made by the Papists asking of us the Question, Where was our Religion before Luther?

2. A Discourse about Tradition, shewing what is meant by it, and what Tradition is to be Received, and what Tradition is to be Rejected.

3. The Difference of the Case between the Separation of Protestants from the Church of Rome, and the Separation of Dissenters from the Church of England.

4. The Protestant Resolution of Faith, *&c.*

Question.

Q. Whether things not prescribed in the Word of God, may be Lawfully used in Divine Worship?

BEfore I proceed to the Case it self, it will be fit to consider what the things are which the Question more immediately respects. For the better understanding of which, we may observe.

1. That there are Essential parts of Divine Worship, and which are, either by Nature or Revelation, so determined, that they are in all Ages necessary : In Natural Religion, such are the Objects of it, which must be Divine ; such are the acknowledgment of Honour, and Reverence, due and peculiar to those Objects, as Prayer, &c. And in the Christian Religion, such are the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lords Supper. These are always to be the same in the Church.

2. There are other things relating to Divine Worship, which are arbitrary and variable, and determined according to Circumstances, as Gesture, Place, &c.

B

As

As to the former it's granted by the contending Parties, that they are all already prescribed, and that nothing in that kind can be added to what is already prescribed, nor can any thing so prescribed be altered, or abolished. **Nothing now can be made necessary and binding to all Persons, Places, and Ages, that was not so from the beginning of Christianity ; and nothing that was once made so by Divine Authority can be rendred void or unnecessary by any other.**

Therefore the Question is to be applied to the latter, and then it's no other than, *Whether things in their own nature Indifferent, though not prescribed in the Word of God, may be lawfully used in Divine Worship ? Or, Whether there be any thing Indifferent in the Worship of God ?*

Toward the Resolution of which, I shall

1. Enquire into the Nature, and state the Notion of things Indifferent.

2. Shew that things Indifferent may be Lawfully used in Divine Worship.

3. Consider how we may know what things are Indifferent in the VVorship of God.

4. How we are to Determine our selves in the use of Indifferent things so applied.

5. Shew that there is nothing required in the Worship of God in our Church, but what is either Necessary in it self, and so binding to all Christians ; or what is Indifferent, and so may be Lawfully used by them.

1. *I shall enquire into the Nature, and state the Notion of things Indifferent.* In doing of which we are to observe, that all things with reference to Practice are reducible to these three Heads.

First, Duty.

Secondly, Sin,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Neither Duty nor Sin.

Duty is either so Morally, and in its own Nature, or made so by Divine and Positive Command. Sin is so in its own Nature, or made and declared to be such by Divine and Positive Prohibition. Neither Duty nor Sin, is that which no Law, either of Nature or Revelation, hath determined; and is usually known by the Name of *Indifferent*, that is, its of a middle Nature, partaking in it self of neither extremes, and may be indifferently used or forborn, as in Reason and Prudence shall be thought meet. Things of this kind the Apostle calls *Lawful*, 1 Cor. 10. 23, &c. because they are the subject of no Law, and what are therefore Lawful to us, and which without Sin we may either chuse or refuse. Thus the Apostle doth determine, Rom. 4. 15. *Where no Law is, there is no Transgression*, that is, it can be no transgression to omit that which the Law doth not injoy, nor to do that which it doth not forbid; for else that would be a Duty which the Law doth not injoy, and that would be a Sin which it doth not forbid; which is in effect to say there is a Law where there is none, or that Duty and Sin are so without respect to any Law. But now if Duty be Duty because its injoyed, and Sin be Sin because its forbidden, then Indifferent is Indifferent because its neither injoyed nor forbidden. For as to make it a Duty there needs a Command, and to make it a Sin there needs a Prohibition, so where there is neither Command nor Prohibition, its neither Duty nor Sin, and must be therefore Indifferent, Lawful, and Free. So that we may as well know by the Silence of the Law, what is Indifferent, as we may know by its Authority, what is a Duty or a Sin. And I have no more Reason to think that a Duty or a Sin which it takes no notice of (since all Obligation ariseth from a Law) than that not to be a Duty or a

Sin which it doth : The Nature of Lawful things being as much determined so to be, by the want of such Authority, as that of Necessary is determined by it : And he that shall say that's a Duty or a Sin which is not so made and declared by any Law, may as well say that's no Duty or Sin which there is a Law about. To conclude, there must be a Law to make it a Transgression, and the want of a Law doth necessarily suppose it to be none, and what there is no Law for or against, remains Indifferent in it self, and Lawful to us. As for instance, suppose there should be a Dispute concerning Days set apart for the Service and Worship of God, how must this be determined but by the Law of Nature or Revelation ? and how shall we be resolved in the case, but by considering what the Law enjoyns or forbids in it ? If we find it not enjoined, it can be of it self no Duty ; if we find it not forbidden, it can be of it self no Sin ; and consequently it's Lawful and Indifferent, and in what we neither Sin by omitting nor observing. So the Apostle concludes, *Rom. 14. 6. He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, unto the Lord he doth not regard it* ; that is, there was no Law requiring it, and so making the observation of it Necessary ; and no Law forbidding it, and so making the observation of it Sinful ; and therefore Christians were at Liberty to observe, or not to observe it as they pleased ; and in both they did well, if so be they had a regard to the Lord in it.

2. *I shall shew that there are things Indifferent in the Worship of God, and that such things, though not prescribed, may be lawfully used in it.* 'Tis allowed by all, that there is no Command to be expected about the Natural Circumstances of Action, and which the Service cannot be celebrated without, such as Time and Place, and

and that these are left to humane Prudence to fix and determine. But what those Natural Circumstances are is not so universally agreed to. And if they be such as aforesaid, that is, *such as the action cannot be performed without*, then it will very much serve to justify most of the things in dispute, and defend our Church in the use and practice of them. For what is there almost in that kind amongst us, which is not Naturally or Morally necessary to the Action, and if Time and Place fall under humane determination, because they are naturally necessary, then why not also Gesture and Habit, which Worship can no more Naturally be celebrated without, than the former; and consequently a Surplice, or Kneeling and Standing may be alike lawfully determined, and used, as Time for assembling together, and a Church to assemble and Officiate in. And what Natural Circumstances are to a Natural Action, that are Moral Circumstances to a Moral Action; and there are Moral as necessary to a Moral Action, as there are Natural necessary to a Natural Action. As for example, what Time and Place are to Natural, that are Method and Order to Moral and Religious Acts, and can no more be separated from these than the other can be separated from the former, and therefore the Method and Order of Administration in Divine Worship (where not otherwise determined and appointed by God) may as well be determined by Men, as Time and Place, with respect to the nature, end, and use of the Service. So that the exception made against humane Appointments in Divine Worship, viz. (*that all but natural circumstances must have a Divine Command to legitimate their use; and that whatever is not prescribed, is therefore prohibited*) is of no service to them that plead it; and it remains good so far notwithstanding, that there are things Indifferent in the Worship of God, and that the outward Order

Order

Order and Administration of it is left to Christian Prudence; And this I shall more particularly prove.

1. From the consideration of the Rules laid down in the Gospel, relating to the Administration of Divine Worship which (except what refer to the Elements, &c. in the Sacraments) are taken from the Nature of the thing; and so always were obliging to all Ages under the several variations and forms of Divine Worship, and will be always so to all Christians in the World, viz. such as respect *Order, Decency and Edification*, insisted upon, 1 Cor. 14. 26, 40. So that we are no otherwise bound, than as bound by these measures, and where not bound by them we are free. For as in former Ages from the beginning of the World, vvhhere Revelation did not interpose (as it did under the Moisaical Dispensation) all persons vvhere left at liberty, and if so be they had a respect to those natural rules, might choose vvhat vvays they pleased for the regulation of Divine Worship: So vvhen under the Gospel we have no other than those Natural rules (except as above excepted) the particular Circumstances are as much now the matter of our free choice, as they vvhere then, and this or that may be used and observed, as the Case requireth and Occasion serves. So that if ever there vvhere things Indifferent in Gods Worship, and the Administration of it was left to the Consideration and Prudence of Mankind, it is so still; since the Gospel keeps to those eternal Rules, which even the Nature of the Thing hath invariably established, and which, if it ever was sufficient for the guiding of the Church of God in those particulars, is certainly so when the Nature of Man is improved by new helps, and so he is more capable of judging what may be suitable to that Essential Worship which God hath prescribed under the Gospel, and to Him whom that Worship is directed to. But then that which confirms

firms this, is, that those Rules are also general ; and
 such as will in their use and end respect all People in
 the VVorld. The Apostles in all their Discourses upon
 this subject rarely do descend to particulars , and in
 what they do, shew how far Custom and Charity, and
 the Reason of the thing ought to govern us ; as in the
 case of mens being Uncovered in the VVorship of God,
 for which the Apostle doth argue not from Institution,
 but the Nature and Decency of it, being in token of
 their preheminance, and the headship they have over
 the VVoman, &c. 1 Cor. II. 47. But otherwise they
 without doubt thought it unpracticable to tye all Na-
 tions up to the same Modes and Circumstances, or if
 practicable, that it was not worth the while, when the
 VVorship might as well be Administred, and God as
 much Honoured by one as the other. Now if they
 did think it sufficient to prescribe only in this General
 way, it must needs be that the particulars of those Ge-
 nerals must be Indifferent, and that the chusing of one
 particular before the other was left to Christian Pru-
 dence. And if it should be said (as it is) that *when
 the things are determined in general, the particulars are
 therein also virtually determined,* and so are not Indif-
 ferent ; I shall content my self to reply, that by this
 way of arguing there would be nothing Indifferent in
 the VVorld : There being nothing, how Lawful and In-
 different soever in it self, but what we are limited by
 General Rules in the use of. As for example, all Meats
 are now Lawful to Christians, but yet there are Gene-
 ral Rules by which we are determined in the use of
 them, such as our own Constitution, and our Quality ,
 or Scandal given to others : But the being thus bound-
 ed by such Rules, doth not change the Nature of
 those Meats, and make them to be other than Indif-
 ferent. So it is in the VVorship of God, for the better
 Admini-

Administration of which there are general Rules laid down; and according to which we are to be determined in our choice of particulars, but yet the particulars notwithstanding are Indifferent and matter of Christian Liberty, and what humane prudence is to regulate us in.

All which will yet be further confirmed by considering the Nature of the things which are the Subject of those general Rules, *viz. Order, Decency, and Edification*, which do mostly, if not altogether, depend upon variable Circumstances, and may be different according to those Circumstances; sometimes this, and at other times that being subservient thereunto. As for instance, Decency doth generally depend upon Custom, and the Custom of Ages and Countries being different, Decency in one Age or Country may be and often is quite different from what it is in another. It was once comely amongst some Nations to be covered in Divine Worship, and practised both amongst the *Jews* in their Synagogues, as the Apostle doth insinuate, *2 Cor. 3. 14.* and their own Authors do acknowledg (a); and also amongst the (b) *Romans*. But it was Comely amongst others to be Uncovered, as amongst the *Grecians*, (c) who in those Times giving Laws of Civility, and in many things of Religion too to other Nations, it became a prevailing Custom, and was, as a thing decent, introduced into the Christian Church. Thus it is also as to *Edification*, which doth in like manner often depend upon Circumstances, and according to those Circumstances the Edification of the Church in its Peace, Union, and Comfort may be promoted or hindered, and that may be for Edification in one Age or Church, which is not so in another.

Thus the being covered in Divine Worship was for Edification in the *Jewish* Church, being used in token
of

(a) Lightf.
Hor. Hebr. in
1 Cor. 11. 4.
(b) Plut.
Probl. Rom.
(c) Macrob.
Saturn. 1. 3.
c. 6.

of Fear and Reverence ; Distance and Subjection ; in allusion to which the *Seraphims* are represented appearing before God , after that manner, *Isai.* 6. 2. and in imitation of whom the Apostle pleads that Woman should be veiled in Religious Assemblies, in token of Subjection and Shamefacedness , *1 Cor.* 11. 10. But on the contrary he doth judge and Determine that , for the Reasons above given, it was better and more for Edification , that Men should be therein Uncovered. So the *Love-feasts*, and *Holy-kiss* of Charity were at the first thought good for Edification, and were accordingly used in Apostolical times, (being an Excellent and Useful, Admirable and Frindly, Custom) as thereby was signified the Universal Love and Charity that Christians ought to maintain, and which they should at all times but especially in Divine Worship be forward to express and renew : But when Disorder and Licentiousness arose from them, they were generally laid aside, and Abolished by Authority.

Chrysoft. and Theophyl. in *1 Cor.* 11. 17. Tertul. Apol. c. 39. de orat. 1. 6.

Concil. Laod. c. 28. &c.

So it was thought to be for Edification in the Primitive Church, to Administer Baptism by immersion or dipping, and the Apostle doth make use of it as an excellent argument to newness of life, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4. and yet notwithstanding the signification of it, and the practise of the Church for a long time, a Charitable reason hath overruled it, and brought in Sprinkling instead of it. Thus sitting at the Lords Supper is accounted decent by some, and Edification, as it's a table posture and is a sign of our being feasted by God ; and yet in a general Synod of the Reformed Churches in Poland, &c. it was declared, that forasmuch as sitting was introduced first by the Arrians (beside the Custom used in all the Evangelical Churches throughout Europe,) we reject it as peculiar to them (that as they do irreverently treat Christ, so also his Sacred appointments) and as a Ceremony less Comely and

Synod. Petri-cav. conclus. An. 1578.

C

Devout

Devout, and so many very offensive. So that Order, Decency and Edification, being generally mutable things, and varying as circumstances vary, there could in the nature of the thing be only general Rules prescribed, and so the particulars must be left to discretion, and to be determined by those that are best able and have Authority to judge of the circumstances, and to pick out of them those which are indifferent, what may best serve the ends of Religion, and the honour of its institutions.

2. I shall prove that things indifferent in themselves, though not prescribed, may be Lawfully used in Divine Worship, from the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles. Under the Law the Constitution was very exact, the Rites and Orders of it very particular, and the Observation of them punctually required. But as it was not so precise, but that many things respecting the outward Order were added, so some things were altered upon prudential considerations; and by the addition or alteration of which the Authority of that Law was not conceived to be infringed, nor violated; as it's evident from the respect which our Saviour shewed to them, and his compliance with them. An instance of this is the Synagogical Worship; It's a controversy whether there was any provision made under the Law for the places themselves, the intimations of that are (if any) very obscure, but there are not so much as any intimations of the manner and order or parts of the Worship therein to be observed; and yet we find such there was, *Acts 13. 14* Moles being read and preached there every Sabbath Day; and that our Saviour frequently resorted to it and bore a part in it, *John 18. 20*, &c. The like temper we find him of, when he used the Cup of Charity after the manner of the Jews, in the Passover, though there was no institution for it; and that it was as many other

other things, taken up and used amongst them by way of signification, and as a Testimony of close Friendship, and Charity. *Luke, 22. 16.* But I conceive alteration of Circumstances in the Institution is much more excusable than the addition of such to it, and yet this was both done by them and observed by our Saviour, when there was nothing else to oblige him, but only a condescension to them in such usages and rites as were inoffensive in themselves, and what were then generally used in the Church. That the posture first required and used in the Passover was standing, the Circumstances, being to be eat with Staves in their Hands and Shoes on their Feet, &c. do prove, and is affirmed by the *Jews*; and it is as manifest that the *Jews* in the time of our Saviour, and for a long time before, did recede from it, and did eat it in the posture of discumbency; whether it was as they looked upon themselves as settled in the possession of *Canaan*, which they were at the first institution Travelling toward; or, as it is said by the latter *Jews*, because it was a sign of Liberty, and after the manner of Kings and Great Men, is not so material, as it is that our Saviour did follow this Custom, and complied with this practice of theirs without hesitation. And thus did the Apostles when they observ'd the hours of Prayer, *Acts, 3. 1.* which were of humane institution as well as the Prayers themselves; (for without doubt they were publick Prayers, which were used in the Temple,) but though the place was, yet that service was of no more Authority than what was used in the Synagogues. Now if the *Jews* did thus institute and alter things relating to external Order and Administration, according as the case might require, and it was lawful for them so to do (as it is plain from the compliance of our Saviour and the Apostles with them in it) then much more may it be supposed lawful for the

Philo de Sacrific. Able, &c.
Lightf. Hor.
Matth. c. 26.
20.

Christian Church to exercise that liberty when they have no other than such general rules for their direction as they had then, without such particulars as they had.

And that this is no other than a certain Truth, will appear from the same liberty taken in Apostolical times in Religious Assemblies; when the Christian Church not only complied with the Jews in such Rites as they were under no Obligation, but that of Charity, to use, & which they did use because they were not forbidden, and so lawful; (as when St. Paul took upon him a Vow, *Acts. 21. 26.*) but also had some Observances of his own, that were of a ritual nature; and as they were taken up, so might be laid down upon prudential consideration. Such I account was the *Washing the Disciples Feet*, which was done by our Saviour in token of the Humility he was to be president of, and would have them follow him in; and which it seems was observed amongst them, *1 Tim. 5. 10.* and for a long time after continued in a sort in some Churches. (a) Such also were the *Love-feasts* at the Administration of the Lords Supper; and the *Holy-kiss* used then amongst Christians, if not as a constant attendant upon all publick Worship, yet to be sure at Prayer. (b) Which and the like usages, however taken up, yet were in the Opinion of the Church no other than Indifferent, and accordingly were upon the abuse of them (as I observed before) discarded. From all which it appears, that there was no such thing as Prescription expected before any Rite should be introduced into the Church, or before it would be lawful for Christians to use it, but that where it was not forbidden, the Practice of the Church was to determine them; and if Prescription had been thought necessary for every thing used in Divine Worship, which was not Natural, then certainly our Saviour

(a) Ambros.
Tom. 4. l. 3. de
Sacrament.
c. 1.

(b) Tertul. de
orat. c. 14.

our and his Apostles would never have used or encouraged others to use any thing that wanted such Authority, and that was not of Divine Institution.

Now if it should be objected that these usages of the Christian Church were *Civil observances, and used as well out of God's Worship as in it*; and therefore what there needed no Institution for, and might be lawfully used without. I answer 1. That this doth justify most of the usages contended for, and there would be nothing unlawful in using a White Garment, &c. in Divine Service, since that as a *sign of Royalty and Dignity* was used in Civil as well as Religious cases, and according to this Argument may therefore lawfully be used in Religious, because it was in Civil. Ames Fresh Suit, l. 2. Sect. 23. &c. p. 334. Calaub. Exercit. 16. c. 73.

Secondly, They must say that either a Civil observance, when used in Religious Worship, remains Civil, notwithstanding it's being so applied, or that it's Religious whilst so applied; if the former, then Kneeling or Standing in the Worship of God would be no acts of Adoration and not be Religious, because those postures are used in Civil matters; if the latter, then it must be granted that there may be Rites used in the Worship of God and to a Religious end, which there is no Divine Prescription for.

Nay Thirdly, It's evident that these and the like were not used by the Christians as meer Civil Rites; this I think is made evident, as to Washing the Feet, by a Learned Person (a); and not only was the kiss of Charity called the *Holy-kiss* in Scripture, but by the Fathers (a) Buxtorf. Exercit. Hist. Sacr. Coenæ. (notwithstanding what is (b) objected) the *Seal of Prayer*, and the *Seal of Reconciliation*, and both consistent, the one as it was an attendant upon the office, the other as it was a Testimony of their Charity and Reconciliation to each other in it. (b) Ames. ibid. p. 342. n. XXX.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, If the being Civil usages did make them which were originally so, to be lawful in or at Divine Worship, then there is nothing that is used out of Worship in Civil cases and affairs, but may be introduced into the Church ; since if it be for that reason that any usages of that kind are defended, the reason will as well defend all as one. And then the Histrionical Practices of the Church of Rome might warantably be introduced, as the *rocking of a Babe in a Cradle at night, at the Nativity time ; the Harrowing of Hell at Easter, &c.* Then a *Maypole* may be brought into the Church for Children to Dance-about and Climb upon, in sign of their desire to seek the things above ; and a *stiff Straw* put into the Childs Hand, for a sign of Fighting against Spiritual Enemies, as with a *Spear* ; And all the absurdities of that Nature charged injuriously upon our Proceedings (a) would return with success upon themselves : Since all these are fetched from Customs and Practices in Secular matters.

(a) Ames;

Ib l. i. c. 3.

P id 1

Fifthly, If this be a reason to Defend the Use of Rites in the Christian Church, *because they are used out of it, and in Civil cases*; then what will become of that Position, before spoken of, and generally asserted by those who oppose us, that *nothing is to be used in the Worship of God without Prescription, except the Natural Circumstances of Action* ; for though Civil and Natural are sometimes coincident, yet they may be and often are Separated ; for Feasting and Salutation are Civil usages, but are no Natural Circumstances in Divine Worship, and which that cannot be performed without, And if these and the like were used in the Church, and applied and annexed to Divine Worship ; then the reason upon which they were introduced and used doth, wherever that reason is, justify the like Practice, and we are left still to choose and act according to the Permission and Allowance that

is

is given us; that is, all such things that are not forbidden are just matter of our Christian Liberty, and there is no Sin in a Prudent exercise of it.

3. I shall further prove and strengthen the Proposition, that *things Indifferent, though not prescribed, may be lawfully used in Divine Worship*, from the ill consequences attending the contrary; one of which is, that if we hold all things not commanded to be prohibited, we shall find no Church or Religious Society in the World but are Guilty; and if the doing so makes Communion with a Church unlawful, there is no Church we can hold Communion with. There are some Churches that do maintain and use such things as the Scripture expressly condemns, and do lay aside such as the Scripture requires; as the Church of *Rome*, in it's Worshipping Saints and Angels, and denying the Cup to the Laity, &c. And these things make it necessary for those to quit it's Communion that are of it, and for those to avoid it that are not in it. But other Churches there are that are Guilty of no such Fundamental Errors and fatal miscarriages, and may so far lawfully be Communicated with. But even none of these are there, but what, either wittingly or unwittingly, do take the liberty of using what the Scripture hath no where required. It was notoriously so in the Ancient Church

when some Customs did universally obtain amongst them; as the Anniversary Solemnities of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and Descent of the Holy-Ghost, the receiving of the Lords Supper Fasting; (a) the Praying toward the East (b); the Standing in their Devotions on the Lords Days, (c) especially from *Easter to Whitsontide*; the Dipping the Baptized thrice in Water (d), &c. Now whatever some of the Fathers might plead for any of these from Scriptures misunderstood, yet it's plain that none of these are required

(a) Aug. Epis.

118. Januar.

(b) Basil. de

Spir. S. c. 27.

(c) Aug. Epis.

119. Januar.

(d) Ambros.

lib. 2. de Sa-

crament. c. 7.

in

in Scripture, and if so, a Person that holds it unlawful to use any thing uncommanded, and to hold Communion with a Church so using, must have separated from the Catholick Church, since (if there be Credit to be given to the Fathers so reporting) they all agreed in the use and Practice of the things above recited. And he that held all fixed Holy-Days of Ecclesiastical Institution unlawful, and all Ceremonies not instituted by God to be prohibited, must not have Worshiped with them, who did not only thus do, but thought it unlawful, when universally Practised to do otherwise.

But again, as there were some Rites universally held in estimation, so there were others that were peculiar to some Churches, and that were not thought to be obliging out of that particular Communion, as when in the Church of *Rome* it was the Custom to Fast on the Saturday; and of most others to make no such distinction betwixt that and other days. (a) In the Church of *Milain* they Washed the Feet of those that were to be Baptized, but in the Church of *Rome*, they used it not (b). Now if Persons did believe such things unlawful, they could have no Communion with any particular Church, because no Church was without such Uncommanded Rites; or if they could be so fond as to think the Rites of their own Church to be of Divine Institution, yet how could they have Communion with a Church, where the contrary Custom did prevail, as in the cases abovesaid. And as it was then, so it is now with all stated and settled Churchers in the World, who do Practice against this Principle, and either expect not or are not able to find a Command for every thing established amongst them; and that Practice with as much contrariety to each other as the Church of *Rome* and *Milain* once did, so in some Churches they receive the Lord's Supper

(a) Aug. Epist.
118.

(b) Ambros.
3. de Sacra-
ment. c. 1.

Supper Kneeling, in some Standing, in others Sitting. In some they Sprinkle the Child in Baptism but once, and in others thrice. Now there would be no reconciling of these one to another, and no possibility of holding Communion with them under these Circumstances, or of being a Member of any Church, if we must have an institution for every thing done in the Worship of God, and that we must joyn in nothing, which has it not. As for Instance, what Church is there in the World, which has not some form or forms of Prayer, and whose Service for the most part (generally speaking) is not made up of them; especially that doth not use them in the Administration of the Sacraments. But now if a Person holds that whatever is not prescribed is unlawful, and that forms of Prayer are no where prescribed, then he cannot joyn with the Church so using, but while in the body of the Church by residence, he must be no Member of that Body in Communion.

Nay further, if this be true, then none must hold Communion with them who are of this Opinion; since those that pretend most to it, and urge it as a reason against Communion with us, live in contradiction to it, and to Practice and Use things which they have no more Authority, nor can give more reason for, than we do for the things they condemn, and that is, that they are lawful, expedient, and convenient. As for Example, let us consider the Sacraments, in which, if any thing, we might expect particular Prescription, because they are meer Institutions; where do they find that the Baptized Person is necessarily to be Sprinkled? What Command or Example have they for it, or what reason more than the reason of the thing taken from expedience and the general Practice of the Church of God in colder Climates? And yet this is as much used amongst them that pretend to keep exactly to the Rule

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of Scripture, as it is amongst us that take a liberty in things Uncommanded; but with this difference, that they do it upon the supposition of a Command, and so make it necessary, and our Church leaves it, as it is, Indifferent. Again, where do they find a Command for Sitting at the Lord's Supper, or so much as an Example? (For the Posture of our Saviour is left very uncertain.) Where again do they find a Command for the necessary use of conceived Prayer, and that that, and no other, should be used in the publick Worship of God? And that they must prove that maintain publick Forms unlawful. Where again do they find it required that an Oath is to be taken by laying the Hand on the Gospel and Kissing the Book? which is both a Natural and Instituted part of Worship, being a Solemn Invocation of God and an appeal to him, with an acknowledgment of his Omniscience, and Omnipresence; his Providence and Government of the World; his Truth and Justice to Right the Innocent and Punish the Guilty; all which is owned and testified by Kissing that Book that God has declared this more especially in. And if we more particularly descend to those that differ from us in this point: Where do those of the Congregational way find that even Christians were otherwise divided from Christians than by place, or that they did combine into particular Churches, so as not to be all the while reputed Members of another, and might be admitted, upon removal of Place, upon the same terms that they were of that they removed from; or indeed that they were so Members of a particular as not to be Members of any or the whole Church of Christ, upon their being Baptized? Where do they find that Christians were gathered out of Christians, and did combine into a Society Excluding those from it that would not make a Profession of their Faith and Conversion distinct from that

that at Baptism ? Where do we ever read that he that was a Minister of one Church was not a Minister all the World over, as well as he that was Baptized in one was reputed a Christian and Church-Member wherever he came ? Again, where do we read that its necessary that Ministers should be alike in Authority, Power, and Jurisdiction, and that there is to be no difference in point of Order and Superiority amongst them : Or that there are to be Elders for Governing the Church, who are not Ordained to it, and are in no other State after than they were before that Service, both of which are held by the Præbyterians, strictly so called ? And if it be said these respect Government but not VVorship ; I answer the case is the same, for if we are to do nothing but what is prescribed in the VVorship of God, because, (as they say) it derogates from the Priestly Office of Christ, and doth detract from the Sufficiency of Scripture ; then I say upon the like reason, there must be nothing used in Church Government but what is prescribed, since the Kingly Office is as much concerned in this as the Priestly in the other, and the Sufficiency of Scripture in both. Lastly, VVhere do any of them find that position in Scripture, *that there is nothing lawful in Divine Worshop but what prescribed, and that what is not Com-manded is Forbidden ?* And if there be no such position in Scripture, then that can no more be true than the want of such a position can render things not Com-manded to be unlawful.

And now I am come to that which must put an Issue one way or other to the Dispute ; for if there be no such position in Scripture, either expressed in it, or to be gathered by good consequence from it, we have gain'd the point ; but if there be, then we must give it up. And this is indeed contended for. For its Objected,

That its accounted in Scripture an hainous Crime *Object. I.*

Levit. 10.
1, &c.

to do things *not commanded*; as when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered *strange Fire* before the Lord, which he Commanded them *not*, &c. From which form of expression it may be collected, that what is *not Commanded* is *Forbidden*; and that in every thing used in Divine Worship there must be a Command to make it lawful and allowable.

Ans^r. I.

To this I answer, that the Proposition infer'd, that *all things not Commanded are Forbidden*, is not true, and so it cannot be the Sence and Meaning of the Phrase; for 1. Then all things must be either Commanded or Forbidden; and there would be nothing but what must be Commanded or Forbidden; but I have before shew'd, and it must be granted, that there are things neither Commanded nor Forbidden, which are called Indifferent.

2. If things not Commanded are Forbidden, then a thing not Commanded is alike Hainous as a thing Forbidden. And then *David's Temple* which he designed to Build would have been Criminal as well as *Jerobo-*

(a) Elth. 9. 27. *am's Dan* and *Bethel*; and the Feast of (a) *Purim*, like
(b) 1 King. 12. *Jeroboam's Eighth Month* (b); and the Synagoga
32. 33. Worship like the Sacrificing in Gardens (c); and the
(c) Mai. 65. 3. hours of Prayer (d) like *Nadab's Strange Fire*. The
(d) Act. 3. 1. former of which were things Uncommanded, and the
latter Forbidden; and yet They were approved and These
condemned.

2. The things, to which this Phrase *not Commanded* is applied, do give no encouragement to such an Inference from it; for its constantly applied to such as are absolutely Forbidden. This was the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who offered Fire not merely Uncommanded, but what was prohibited, which will appear, if we consider that the Word *Strange* when applied to matters of Worship doth signify as much as Forbidden. Thus we read of *Strange Incense*, that is, other than what was com-
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Exod. 30. 9.

pounded according to the directions given for it; which as it was to be put to no common uses, so no common ^{ver. 34.} perfume was to be put to the like uses with it. So we ^{Ch. 37: 29.} also read of *Strange Vanities*; which is but another ^{Jer. 8. 19.} Word for *Graven Images*; and of *Strange Gods*. And after the same sort is it to be understood in the case before us, viz. for what is Forbidden. For that such was the Fire made use of by those Young Men will be further confirm'd, if we consider that there is scarcely any thing belonging to the Altar (Setting aside the Structure of it) of which more is said than of the Fire burning upon it. For 1. It was lighted from Heaven (a). 2. It was always to be burning upon the Altar. (b) 3. If it was not made use of in all Sacred ^{(a) Lev. 9. 24.} matters (where Fire was to be used) yet it was most ^{(b) Ch. 6. 12.} Holy, and when Atonement was to be made by Incense, the Coals were to be taken from thence (c), and therefore surely was as peculiar to those Offices as the Incense, and to be as constantly used in them, as never to be used in any other. And it will yet make it more evident if it be considered 4. That just before there is an account given of the Extraordinary way by which this Fire was lighted, for the Text saith, *there came out a Fire from before the Lord, and consumed upon the Altar the Burnt-Offering, &c.* and immediately follows the Relation of Nadab's miscarriage. Now for what reason are these things so closely connected, but to shew wherein they Offended. For before it was the Office of Aaron's Sons to put Fire upon the Altar, and now through inadvertency or Presumption Attempting to do as formerly, when there had been this Declaration from Heaven to the contrary, they Suffered for it. 5. It appears further from the conformity betwixt the Punishment and the Sin; as *there came Fire from before the Lord and consumed the Burnt-Offering*; to reach them

them what Fire for the future to make use of; So upon their Transgression there came out Fire from the Lord and devoured them; to teach others how Dangerous it was to do otherwise than he had Commanded. So that it seems to me to be like the case of *Uzzah*, when they carried the Ark in a Cart, which the *Lewites* were to have born upon their Shoulders; and it was not an Offering without a Command, but otherwise than Commanded, that was their Fault; and without doubt they might with no more Offence have taken what Fire they would for their Incense, than what Wood they pleased for their Fire, if there had been no more direction about the one than the other. But to proceed in the other places of Scripture where this Phrase of *not Commanded* is to be met with, its also so applied to things Forbidden; as to what is called *Abomination*, which is the Worshipping of *Strange Gods, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the Host of Heaven: To the building the High Places of Topheth, and the burning their Sons and Daughters in the Fire to Baal, and causing them to pass through the Fire unto Molech.* Of such and the like its said, which I *Commanded them not, neither came it into my mind.* And lastly its applied to the false Prophets, who *spake Lies in the Name of the Lord;* in which case the meer being not Commanded nor sent by him, is in the nature of the thing no less than a Prohibition, it being a Belying God; though there had been no such place, as, *Deut. 18. 20.* to forbid it. Now if so much stress was to be laid upon the Phrase, as the Objection doth suppose, and that we must take a Non-Commanding for a Prohibition, we might reasonably expect to find the Phrase elsewhere applied to things that were no otherwise Unlawful than because not Commanded; but when its always spoken of things plainly Prohibited, its a sign that its rather God's Forbidding that made them Unlawful,

1 Chron. 13.

7. 10.

Ch. 15. 2.

Deut. 17. 34.

Jer. 7. 31.

Ch. 19. 5.

Ch. 32. 35.

Jer. 29. 22, 23.

ful, than his not Commanding. But it may still be said, why should then the Phrase be used at all in such matters, and why should the case be thus Represented, if not Commanded is not the same with Prohibited?

To this I answer, 1. That all things Prohibited are by consequence not Commanded; but it follows not that all things not Commanded are Prohibited. If it was Forbidden to Offer Strange Fire, then it was a thing not Commanded (for otherwise the same thing would be Forbidden and Commanded) but if it had been a thing not Commanded only, it would not by being so have been any more Prohibited than the Wood that was to be burnt upon the Altar. Now its with respect to the former that things Prohibited are called things not Commanded; and not with respect to the latter. 2. Indeed the Phrase *not Commanded* is only a Meiosis or Softer way of speaking, when more is understood than express'd. A Figure usual in all Authors and Languages; that I know of, and what is frequently to be met with in Scripture. Thus its given as a Character of an Hypocritical People, *they choose that in which I Delight not*, which is but another Word for what was said in the verse before, *their Soul Delighted in their Abominations*; or Idolatries. And when the Apostle would Describe the evil State of the Gentile World, by the most Hainous and Flagitious Crimes, such as Fornication, Covetousness, Laciviousness, Envy, Murder, and what not, he saith of these, that they were *things not Convenient*. And it is as evident that the Phrase *not Commanded* is of the like kind, when the things its applied to are alike Notorious and Abominable.

Isai. 66: 3. 4.
Ch. 65. 3, 12.

Rom. 1. 28. 29.

But its further Objected, that its said in Scripture, *ye shall not add unto the Word which I Command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it*. And that our Saviour condemning the Practices of the Scribes in this kind, concludes,

Object. I I.
Deut. 4. 2.

Matth. 15. 9. concludes, *In Vain do they Worship me, Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* From whence it may be collected 1. That all things not Commanded by God in his Word are additions to it. 2. That such additions are altogether unlawful.

Answer.

To this I reply,

Deut. 4. 4. 6.
(a) Deut. 12.
32.

1. If they mean by *adding to the Word*, the doing what that Forbids, and by *diminishing*, the neglecting of what that requires (as the next Words do intimate, and is plainly the sense otherwise (a), when its no sooner said, *What thing soever I Command you, Observe to do it*; but it immediately follows, *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*) its what we willingly condemn; according to that of our Saviour, *Whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

2 King. 16. 14,
17.

2. If they mean by *adding* the appointing somewhat else instead of what God hath appointed, as Jeroboam did the Feast of the Eighth Month; and by *diminishing* the taking away what God hath Commanded, as Akaz did the Altar, and Laver, &c. This is what we condemn also, and do blame in the Church of Rome, whilst they feed the People with Legends instead of Scripture, and take away both that and the Cup from the Laity.

Matth. 15. 3.

3. If they mean by *adding*, the adding insolent explications to the Command, by which the end of it is frustrated. This our Saviour condemn'd in the Pharisees, *Why do ye Transgress the Command of God by your tradition? For God Commanded saying, Honour thy Father, &c. but ye say, whosoever shall say to his Father, it is a gift, &c. Thus ye have made the Commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.* And this we condemn in the Church of Rome, who do defeat the Commands of God by their Doctrines of Attrition and Purgatory, &c.

4. If

4. If they mean by *adding*, the making of that which is not the Word of God, to be of equal Authority with it ; This our Saviour condemn'd in the *Pharisees*, when they *Taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, and esteem'd them as necessary to be obeyed, and to be of equal force with what was Authorized by him ; nay it seems, they had more regard to the Tradition of the Elders, than the Commandment of God , as our Saviour Insinuates, vers. 2, 3. and has been observed from their own Authors. This we also condemn in the Church of *Rome* , which decrees, that the Apocrypha and Traditions should be received *with the like Pious regard, as the Sacred Writ.* Con. Trid;
Sess. 4. Decr. 1.

5. If by *adding*, they mean the giving the same Efficacy to humane Institutions, as God doth to his, by making them to confer Grace upon the rightly disposed ; and by *diminishing*, that the Service is not complete without it. This our Saviour condemn'd in the *Pharisees*, when they maintained, that to *eat with unwashen Hands defiled a Man*, verse 20. And this we condemn in the Church of *Rome*, in their use of Holy-Water, and Reliques and Ceremonies.

Thus far we agree ; but if they proceed, and will conclude, that the doing any thing not Comanded, in the Worship of God, is a Sin, though it have none of the ingredients in it before spoken of, we therein differ from them, and upon very good reason. For therein they differ from our Saviour and his Apostles, and all Churches, as I have shewed. Therein also they depart from the notion and reason of the thing : For *adding* is adding to the substance, and making the thing added of the Nature of the thing its added to ; and *diminishing* is diminishing from the substance, and taking away from the Nature of it, but when the substance remains intire, as much after this humane appointment as it was

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before it, without Loss and Prejudice, without Debasement or Corruption, it cannot be called an addition to it, in the sense that the Scripture takes that Word in.

Nay so far are we from admitting this charge, that we return it upon them, and do bring them in Criminals upon it. For those that do Forbid what the Gospel Forbids not, do as much add. to it, as those that Command what the Gospel doth not Command: And if it be a Crime to Command what that Commands not, it must be so to Forbid what it Forbids not. And this is what they are Guilty of that do hold that *nothing is to be used in the Worship of God but what is prescribed*, for if that be not a Scripture Proposition and Truth (as certain it is not) then what an addition is this? A greater surely than what they charge upon us; for all that is Commanded amongst us, is look'd upon not as necessary but expedient; but what is Forbid by them is Forbid as absolutely unlawful; the latter of which alters the Nature, whereas the other only affects the Circumstances of things.

Object. III. The second Commandment, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any Graven Image, &c.* is frequently made use of to prove that we must apply nothing to a Religious Use but what is Commanded; and we are told that the sense of it is, that *We must Worship God in no other way, and by no other means or Religious Rites, than what he hath prescribed.*

Answer. The best way to answer this is. 1. To consider what is Forbidden in this Commandment, and 2. To shew that we are not concern'd in the Prohibition. As to the former.

1. In this Command it is provided, that there be no act of Adoration given to any besides God. By this the Heathens are condemned in their Plurality of Gods, and the

the Church of Rome in the Veneration they give to Saints and Angels.

2. That the Honour we give to God be sutable to his Nature, and agreeable to his Will. Sutable to his Nature; and so we are not to Worship him by Creatures, as the Sun, &c. for that is to consider him as Finite; nor by Images and Eternal Representations, for that is to consider him as Corporeal: Agreeable to his Will; and so we are Forbidden all other Worship of him than what he hath appointed. Its in the last of these we are concerned, for I believe there will be no attempt to prove that there is any thing in our Worship that doth derogate from the perfections of God, and is unsutable to his Nature, further than the defects that must arise from all Worship given by Creatures to a Creator. And if we come to consider it as to what he hath revealed, there can be nothing deduced thence to prove Rites instituted by Men for the Solemnity of God's service to be Forbidden; and which for ought I see is not attempted to be proved from this Commandment, or from Scripture else where, but by crowding such Rites into and representing them as a part of Divine Worship. This way goes one of the most industrious in this cause.

Ceremonies, saith he, are External Rites of Religious Worship as used to further Devotion, and therefore being invented by Man are of the same Nature with Images, by which and at which God is Worshipped.

Ames Fresh
Suit, part. 2.
sect. 2. com-
mand, p. 228.

In which are no less than three mistakes. As 1. He makes whatever is used to further Devotion to be Religious Worship. 2. He makes it a fault in External Rites in Religious Worship that they are used to further Devotion. 3. He makes External Rites taken up by Men, and used for that end to be of the same Nature with Images. If I shew that these are really mistakes, I think that in doing so the whole argument taken from 2d. Commandment

falls with it. 1. He mistakes, in that he makes *what-ever is used to further Devotion, to be Religious Worship*. The error of which will appear from this consideration; that all things relating to Divine Worship, are either Parts or Adjuncts of it; Parts, as Prayer, and the Lord's Supper; Adjuncts, as Form and Posture. Now Adjuncts are not Parts, because the Worship is intire and invariable in all the Parts of it, and remains the same though the Adjuncts vary. Prayer is VVorship, whether with a Form or without; and the Lord's Supper is VVorship, whether Persons kneel, Sit or Stand, in the receiving of it. And yet though the Adjuncts are no part of VVorship, they further Devotion in it. This those that are for conceived Prayer, plead for Their Practice, and this also is pleaded by those that are for a Form. This do they urge, that are for Sitting at the Lord's Supper, and this they say, that are for Kneeling; so that these and the like Adjuncts do further Devotion, and are for Edification, is an argument used by both. Now if Adjuncts are not part of VVorship, and may be yet used to further Devotion, then the furthering Devotion by any Rite, doth not in it self make that Rite so used, to be VVorship. I acknowledge there is False VVorship as well as True; True VVorship is of Divine Institution, and False VVorship is of Humane Appointment; and becomes Worship, when either Divine Institution is pretended for it or its used for the same special ends that Gods VVorship is instituted for, that is, as necessary to acceptance, or as a means of Grace. And so I confess Adjuncts may be made parts of False VVorship, as many Ceremonies are in the Church of Rome; but this is not the case with any things used in the Administration of VVorship in our Church; we plead nothing of Divine Authority to enforce them, use them not as necessary, nor as means of Grace; after the manner we do the VVord of God, and the Sacraments. 2. Its another mistake, that
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its charged as a fault upon Rites in VVorship, that *They are used to further Devotion.* Without this end surely they are not to be used, or at least not to be encouraged; for Divine VVorship being the acknowledgment of God, and a giving Honour to Him, should have all things about it Grave and Solemn, that may best sute it, and promote the ends for which its used, But if Rites are used in it, that have no respect to such ends, they become Vain and Trifling, neither worthy of that nor our Defence. And therefore we justly blame the Church of Rome for the Multitude of Ceremonies used in their VVorship, and for such, that either have no signification, or whose signification is so obscure, as is not easie to be observed or traced, and that rather hinder than further Devotion. Surely it would not so well answer the end, if the Hand in Swearing was laid upon another Book, as when on the Gospel; nor if the Love-feasts at the Lords Supper had been only as a Common Meal, without respect to Charity signified by it. 3. Its another mistake that *External Rites taken up by Men, and used for the furthering Devotion, are made to be of the same Nature with Images.* This there is no foundation for, for the Religious use of Images is expressly contrary to the Command of God, and Forbidden, because it tends to debase God in the thoughts of those that VVorship him by such mediums. But there is nothing in the use of such External Rites (as are before spoken of) that fall under the censure of either of these; but that we may lawfully use them, and the use of which is not therefore at all Forbidden in the Second Commandment.

If there be not a Rule for all things belonging to the VVorship of God, the Gospel would be less perfect than the Law; and Christ would not be so Faithful as Moses, in the care of his Church, *Heb. 3. 2.* which is not to be supposed.

Object. IV.

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Answer.

The sufficiency of Scripture and Faithfulness of Christ are not to be judged of by what we fancy they should have determined, but by what they have. Its a plausible Plea made by the Church of *Rome* for an Infallible Judge in matters of Faith, that by an Appeal to him all controversies would be decided, and the Peace of the Church secured. But notwithstanding all the advantages which they so hugely amplify, there is not one Word in Scripture (which in a matter of that importance is absolutely necessary) that doth shew that it is necessary; or (were it so) who the Person or Persons are that should have this Power or Commission. And in this case we must be content to leave things as the Wisdom of God hath thought fit to leave them, and to go on in the old way of sober and amicable debate and fair reasoning to bring debates to a conclusion. Thus it is in the matter before us, the pretence is very Popular and Plausible, that, Who can better determine things Relating to the Worship of God, than God whose Worship it is? And where may we expect to find them better determined than in his Word, which is sufficient to all the ends it was writ for? But when we come to enquire into the case, we find no such thing done, no such care taken, no such particular directions as they had under the Law; and therefore its certain that neither the sufficiency of Scripture, nor Faithfulness of Christ stand upon that foundation. And if we do not find the like particular prescriptions in Baptism as Circumcision; nor in the Lord's Supper as in the Passover; nor in Prayers as in Sacrifices; its plain that the sufficiency of Scripture and Faithfulness of Christ do respect somewhat else, and that they are not the less for the want of them. Christ was Faithful, as *Moses*, To him that appointed him, in performing what belonged to him as a Mediator (in which

which respect *Moses* was a Type of him) and discovering to Mankind in Scripture the method and means by which they might be Sav'd; and the sufficiency of Scripture is in being a sufficient means to that end, and putting Men into such State as will render them capable of attaining to it. And as for modes and circumstances of things, they are left to the prudence of those who by the Grace and the Word of God hath been converted to the Truth, and have received it in the Love of it. I have been the larger in the consideration of this principle, *viz.* that *Nothing but what is prescribed may be lawfully used in Divine Worship.* that I might relieve the consciences of those that are inured by it, and that cannot be so, without subjecting themselves to great inconveniences. For if nothing but what is of that Nature may be used or joyned with, and that the second Commandment doth with as much Authority Forbid the use of any thing not Commanded, as the Worshiping of Images: If *Nadab's* and *Abihu's* Strange Fire, and *Uzzah's* touching of the Ark be examples Recorded for caution to us, and that every thing Uncommanded, is of the like Nature, attended with the like Aggravations, and alike do expose to God's Displeasure: If the use of any thing not prescribed be such an addition to the Word of God, as leaves us under the Penalty of that Text; *If any Man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are Written in this Book;* we cannot be too cautious in the Examination of what is, or what is not prescribed. But with all, if this be our case, it would be more intollerable than that of the *Jews*. For amongst them every thing for the most part was plainly laid down, and though the particuler Rites and Circumstances prescribed in their Service were many, yet they were sufficiently describ'd in their Law, and it was but consulting that, or Those whose

Rev. 22. 18.

whose

whose Office and Employment it was to be well versed in it, and they might be presently inform'd, and as soon see it as the Book was laid open. This they all agreed in. But it is not so under the Gospel, and there is no greater proof of it than the several schemes drawn up for Discipline, and Order, by those that have been of that Opinion and made some attempts to describe them. And then when things are thus dark and obscure, so hard to trace and discover, that it has thus perplexed and baffled those that have made it their business to bring these things within Scripture Rules, how perplexed must they be that are not skilled in it, And (as I have above shew'd) must all their Days live in the Communion, it's likely, of no Church; since though a Church should have nothing in it but what is prescribed, yet it would take up a great deal of time to examine, and more to be satisfied, that all in it is prescribed.

§ 3. I shall consider, *How we may know what things are Indifferent in the Worship of God?* I may answer to this, that we may know what is Indifferent in the Worship of God, by the same Rule that we may know what is Indifferent out of Worship, that is, if the thing to be enquired after, be neither required nor Forbidden: For the Nature of Indifferency is always the same, and what it is in one kind or instance, it is in all; and if the want of a Law, to Require or Forbid, doth make a thing Indifferent in Nature or Civil matters; it doth also the same in Religious: And in things Forbidden by Humane Authority, the not being required in Scripture; and in things required by Humane Authority, the not being Forbidden in Scripture, is a Rule we may safely determine the case, and judge of the Lawfulness and Indifferency of things in *Divine Worship* by. But I confess the Question requires a more particular Answer, because things in their Nature Lawful and Indifferent, may

may yet, in their use and application, become unlawful. As it is in Civil cases and Secular matters, to be Covered or Uncovered is a thing in it self Indifferent ; but to be Covered in the presence of such of our Betters, as Custom and Law have made it our Duty to stand bare before, would be unlawful, and it would be no excuse for such an Omission and Contempt, that the thing is in it self Indifferent. And then much more will this hold where the case is of an higher Nature ; as it is in the Worship of God, where things in themselves Indifferent may become Ridiculous, Absurd and Profane, and argue rather contempt of God than reverence for him in the Persons using them. Again, the things may, though Grave and Pertinent, yet be so numerous that they may obscure and oppress the Service, and confound and distract the Mind that should attend to the Observation of them ; and so for one reason or another are not to be allowed in the Solemnities of Religion. Therefore in Answer to the Question, I shall add,

1. That things Indifferent are so called from their general Nature, and not as if in practice and use, and all manner of cases, they always were so, and never unlawful ; for that they may be by Accident and Circumstance, being lawful or unlawful, expedient or inexpedient, as they are used and applied.

2. I observe that there are several Laws which things Indifferent do respect ; and that may be Required or Forbidden by one Law, which is not Forbidden or Required by another ; and that may be Indifferent in one State which is Unlawful in another, and by passing out of one into the other may cease to be Indifferent, and therefore when we say things are Indifferent, we must understand of what Rank they are, and what Law they do respect ; As for example, Humane Conversation,

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and

and Religious Worship are different Ranks to which things are referred ; and therefore what may be Indifferent in Conversation, may be unlawful in Worship. Thus to Enterchange Discourse about Common Affairs, is a thing lawful in it self, and useful in its place ; but when practised in the Church, and in the midst of Religious Solemnities, is Criminal. This distinction of Ranks and States of things is useful and necessary to be observed, and which if observed would have prevented the objection made by some, that if a Church or Authority may Command Indifferent things, then they may require us to Pray Standing upon the head, &c. for that though Indifferent in another case, is not in that, as being unfutable to it.

3. Therefore we must come to some Rules in Divine Worship, by which we may know what things in their Nature Indifferent, are therein also Indifferent, and may be lawfully used : It being not enough to plead they are Indifferent in themselves (as some unwarily do) and therefore presently they may be used ; For by the same reason, a Person may Spit in anothers Face, may keep on his Hat before the King, &c. the Spitting and being Covered, being in their Nature Indifferent, But now as there are certain Rules which we are to respect in Common and Civil Conversation, and which even in that case do tye us up in the use of things, otherwise Indifferent : So it is as reasonable, and must be much more allowed, that there are some Rules of the like Nature which we must have a regard to in the Administration of Divine Worship. And as in Common matters, the Nature of the thing ; in Actions the end ; in Conversation the circumstances are to be heeded, viz. Time, Place, Persons ; as when, where, before whom we are Covered or Uncovered, &c. So in Sacred matters ; the Nature of the thing, in the Decency and Solemnity

ternity of the Worship; the end for which it was appointed, in the Edification of the Church; and the Peace, Glory, Security of that, in its Order are to be respected. And according to these Rules and the circumstances of things, are we to judg of the Indifferency, Lawfulness, or expediency of things used in the Service of God; and as they do make for, or against, and do approach to, or recede from these Characters, so they are to be rejected or observed, and the more or less esteemed. But yet we are not come to a conclusion, for 1. These are general Rules, and so the particulars are nor so easily pointed to. 2. Decency, and Edification, and Order are (as was observed before) Variable and Uncertain, and depend upon Circumstances, and so in their Nature not easily determined. And, 3. Persons have very different Opinions about what is Decent, Edifying, and Orderly; as in the Apostles time in the Church of *Rome*, some were for, and others against, the Observation of Days; and in the Church of *Corinth*, some doubtless were for being Covered, others for being Uncovered, in Divine Worship. And therefore there is somewhat further requisite to give Satisfaction in the point; and by which we may be able to Judg what is Decent, Edifying, and Orderly; as well as we are by what is Decent, &c. to Determine what is fit to be used in Religious Worship. And this we may be help'd in by considering,

1. That some things make so Eminently for, or are so Notoriously opposite to these Rules, that Common Reason will be able forthwith to Judge of them, and to declare for or against them. So when the Love-feasts, and the Lords Supper were appointed for the testifying and increase of mutual Charity; if one took his Supper before another, it was to make it rather a private Meal, than a Religious Feast, and so was a Notori-

1 Cor. 11
20, 21.

ous Breach of Order and Christian Fellowship. So a Tumultuous speaking of many together is less for Edification, and hath more of Confusion than the Orderly speaking of one by one. And Service in an Unknown Tongue doth less conduce to Edification than when it

1. Cor. 14. 16.
17, 26, 27.

it is in a Language Vulgarly known and Understood; this is a case that Reason as well as the Apostle doth Determine to our Hands, and which Mankind would with one consent soon agree to, were it not for a certain Church in the World that carries those of its Communion, against sense, Reason, and Nature, for its own advantage.

2. But there are other things which are not so Clear and Evident, and so the case needs further consideration. For the clearing of which we may observe,

Chrys. in
1. Cor.

Ch. 14. 40.

1. Cor. 14. 26.

1. That we are not so much to Judge of Decency, Order, and Edification asunder, as together; these having a mutual Relation to and dependance upon each other. So its well observed by St. Chrysostom, *That nothing doth so much Edify, as Order, Peace and Love:* And the Apostle when he had reprov'd the Disorders of their Service in the Church of *Corinth* concludes it, *Let all things be done to Edifying.* The not observing of this is the occasion of very great Mistakes in this matter; For Persons when they would Judge of Edification consider presently what they conceive doth most improve them in Knowledge or any particular Grace; and having no further consideration, for the sake of this throw down the Bounds of Publick Order and bring all into Confusion; and for Edifying (as they apprehend) themselves do Disturb if not Destroy the Church of God, and render the means used in it ineffectual to themselves and others. Thus again they Judge of what is Decent, and Indecent; and conclude that there is no Indecency in Sitting, suppose at the

the Sacrament, or the Prayers ; but they mistake in such a conception, whilst what is against publick Order and Practice, is for that reason Indecent, were there no other reason to make it so. So that if we would Judge a-right of either of these we must Judge of them together ; and as Order alone is not enough to make a thing Decent which is in it self Indecent ; so Decency or particular Edification is not enough to recommend that which is not to be Introduced or Obtained without the Disturbance and Overthrow of publick Order and Peace.

2. When the case is not apparent, we should rather Judge by what is contrary than by what is agreeable to those Rules. We know better what things are not than what they are : And if Christians should never agree to any thing in the External Administration of Divine Worship till they agree in the notion of Decency, Order, and Edification ; or till they can prove that the things used, or required to be used in a Church, do exactly agree to the Notion and Definition of it ; Worship must never be Administred, or the greater part of Christians must Exclude themselves from it. And yet this must be done before it can be positively said (unless in things very manifest) that this is Decent, or that is Orderly, &c. These things as I have said are variable, and depend upon Circumstances ; and so Persons must needs be Wonderfully Confounded if they come to Niceties and insist upon them. And therefore as we better know what is Indecent than Decent, Disorderly than Orderly, against than for Edification, so its better to take the course abovesaid in Judging about it. As for instance, if we would enquire into the Decency of the Posture to be used in the Lord's Supper, or the Edification that may arise from it ; some will say its best to receive it in the Posture frequently used in the Devoti-
ons.

ons of the ancient Church of Standing or Incurvation ; others would choofe Sitting, as the dissenting Parties amongft us, and some Forreign Churches; others be for the Posture of Kneeling, used in ours and many more, and all with some shew of Reason. In these different cases it may not perhaps be so easy for a Person (Educated in a different way from what is practised and Prescribed) to Judge of the Decency or Edification ; but if he find it not Indecent, or Destructive of Piety, and of the ends for which the Ordinance was Instituted, he is therewith to satisfy himself. *St. Austin* puts alike case, and gives the like answer. *Some Churches Fast on the Saturday, because Christ's Body was then in the Grave, and he in a State of Humiliation. Others do Eat on the Saturday, both, because that Day God Rested from his Work, and Christ Rested in the Grave.* And how in such a case to Determine our selves, both in Opinion and Practice, that Father thus directs, *If saith he, what is joyned be not against Faith, or good Manners, it is to be accounted Indifferent.* And I may add, if it be not Indecent, Disorderly and Destructive of Piety, its lawful.

3. If the case be not apparent, and we cannot easily find out how the things used, and injoyed in a Church, are Decent, &c. we are to consider that we are in, or Obligated to be of a Church, and that these things do respect such a Society ; and therefore are to be Cautious how we Condemn this or that for Indecent, Confused, and Inexpedient, when we see Christians agreeing in the Practice of them, and such whom for other things we cannot Condemn. When we find, if we argue against it, they argue for it, and produce Experience against Experience, and Reason against Reason, and that we have a whole Church against our particular conceptions of things of this Nature ; we should be apt to think the Fault may be in our selves, and that its for want of Under-

Understanding and Insight, for want of Use and Tryal, and by Reason of some Prejudices or Professions, that we thus differ in our Judgment from them. We see what little things do Determin Men ordinarily in these matters; how addicted some are to their own Ways and Customs, and forward to Like or Condemn, according to their Education, which doth form their conceptions and fix their inclinations; how Prone again others are to Novelty and Innovation. So St. *Austin* Epist. 1. 3. observes, some warmly contend for an usage, *because its the Custom of their own Church; as if they come, suppose into another Place where Lent is observed without any Relaxation, they however refuse to Fast, because its not so done in their Country.* There are others again do like, and are bent upon a particular Rite or Usage, *Because, saith he, they observed this in their Travels abroad, and so a Person is for it, as perhaps he would be thought so much the more Learned and Considerable, as he is distant, or doth disagree, from what is observed at home.* Now when Persons are Prone thus to Judg upon such little Reasons, and may mistake in their Judgment, and do Judg against a Church (which they have no other Reason against) it would become them to think again; and to think that the case perhaps requires only time, or use, to wear off their Prejudices, and that by these ways they may as effectually be reconciled to the things Practised in a Church, as they are to the Civil Usages and the Habits of a Nation, which at the first they looked upon in their kind as Indecent and Inexpedient, as they can do of the Usages of a Church in theirs. As suppose the Dispute should be about Forms of Prayer, or the use of responsals in it, we see that Decency, Order, and Edification are pleaded by the Parties contending for and against, but when a Person considers that whatever Opinion he therein hath, yet if he be against them,

Epist. 86.
Casilano.

them, he is at the same time against all formed Churches in the World, he may conclude safely that there is a Decency, Order, and Expediency in the Publick use of them; and as St. *Austin* saith of a Christian living in Rome where they fasted upon the Saturday that *such a one should not so praise a Christian City for it, as to condemn the Christian World that was against it*; so we should not be so Zealous against a Practice, as to condemn those that are for it, and be so addicted to our own Opinion as to set that against a Community and a Church, nay against all Churches whatsoever. This will give us reason to suspect its a *Zeal without Knowledge* when we presume to set our Judgment, Reason, and Experience, against the Judgment, Reason and Experience of the Christian World. Which brings to the Fourth General.

4. *How are we to determine our selves in the use of Indifferent things with respect to the Worship of God?* For resolution of which, we are to consider our selves in a threefold Capacity, 1. As particular Persons, solitary and alone. 2. As we are in Ordinary and Civil Conversation. 3. As we are Members of a Publick Society or Church.

In the first capacity, every Christian may chuse and act as he pleaseth; and all Lawful things remain to him, as they are in their own Nature, Free. He may eat this or that; chuse this day or another, and set it apart for the Service of God and his own Soul. In this state, where there is no Law of Man to require, he may forbear to use what is Indifferent; where there is no Law to Forbid, he may freely use it.

In the second capacity, as in Conversation with others, he is to have a regard to them, and to use his Liberty so as shall be less to the prejudice, and more to the benefit of those he converses with. So saith the Apostle,

Apostle, *all things are lawful for me, but all things are* 1 Cor. 10. 23.
not expedient ; all things are lawful for me , but all things
Edify not. In this Capacity Men are still in their own
 Power ; and whilst its no Sin they may safely act ,
 and where its no Sin they may forbear in compliance
 with those that are not yet advanced to the same Ma-
 turity of Judgment with themselves ; as the Apostle
 did, *Though, saith he, I be free from all Men, yet have I* 1 Cor. 9. 19,
made my self Servant unto all, that I might gain the more. &c.
And unto the Jews I became a Jew, &c. In such a case
 the strong should not despise , affront , or discourage
 the weak ; nor the weak censure and condemn the
 strong.

In the third Capacity, as we are Members of a Church
 and Religious Society , so the use of Indifferent things
 comes under further consideration , since then the
 Practice of a Church and the Commands of Authority
 are to be respected. And as what we may lawfully do
 when alone, we are not to do in Conversation, because
 of Offence : So what we may allowably do when a-
 lone or in Conversation, we must not do in Society ,
 if Forbidden by the Laws and Customs of it. For the
 same reason (if there was no more) that Restrains or
 Determines us in Conversation, is as much more forcible
 in Society, as the Peace and Welfare of the whole is to
 be preferred before that of a part ; And if the not griev-
 ing a Brother, or endangering his Soul makes it reason-
 able, just, and necessary to forego our Liberty , and to
 Restrain our selves in the exercise of it , then much
 more is the Peace of a Church (upon which the present
 Welfare of the whole, and the Future Welfare of many
 depend) a sufficient reason for so doing, and to Oblige
 us to act or not to act accordingly. The Apostle saith ,
Let every one of us please his Neighbour for his good to Rom. 15. 2.
Edification, that is, to his Improvement in Knowledge

or Grace, or Christian Piety, and the promoting of Christian Concord and Charity : Now Edification is eminently so with respect to the whole, as the Church is *the House of God*, and every Christian one of the *living Stones* of which that Spiritual building is compacted ; and so he is to consider himself, as well as he is to be considered, as a part of it, and to study what may be for the Edification of the whole, as well as the good of any particular Member of it. And how is that but by promoting Love, Peace, and Order, and taking Care to Preserve it ? So we find Edification Opposed to Destruction, to Confusion, to Disputacity and Licentiousness : And on the contrary, we find Peace and Edifying, Comfort and Edification, Union and Edification joyned together, as the one doth promote the other. And therefore as the Good and Edification of the whole is to be always in our Eye, so its the Rule by which we ought to act in all things lawful ; and to that end should comply with its Customs, observe its Directions, and Obey its Orders, without Reluctancy and Opposition. Thus the Apostle resolves the case, Writing about publick Order and the Custom newly taken up of Worshipping Uncovered, *if any Man seem*, or have a mind *to be*, contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God ; looking upon that as sufficient to put an end to all Contentions and Debates ; that whatever might be Plausibly urged against it, from the Jewish Practice, and the Representation even of Angels adorning after that manner ; and from the reason of the thing as a signification of Shame and Reverence ; or from the Practice of Idolators that did many of them Worshipping Uncovered ; yet he peremptorily concludes, *We have no such Custom, &c.* The Peace of the Church is to a Peaceable Mind sufficient to put an end to all Disputes about it ; and the Peace of the Church depending upon the

1 Pet. 2: 5.

2 Cor. 10: 8.

1 Cor. 14: 26.

1 Tim. 1: 4.

Rom. 14: 19.

1 Thes. 5: 11.

Eph. 4: 12, 16.

3 Cor. 11: 16.

the Observation of its Coustoms, that is infinitely to be preferred before Scrupulosity and Niceness, or a meer inclination to a contrary Practice. For in publick cases a Man is not to go his own way, or to have his own mind, for that would bring in Confusion (one Man having as much a right as another.) There must be somewhat Established, some Common Order and Bond of Union; and if Confusion is before such Establishment, then to break that Establishment, would bring in Confusion; and where that is likely to ensue, it is not worth the while for the Tryal of a new Experiment to decry and throw down what is already Established or Used in a Church, because we think better of another; for saith a Grave Author, and well Skill'd in these matters, *The very change of a Custom though it may happen to profit, yet doth disturb by its Novelty.* Pub-^{Aug. Epist. 118.} lick Peace is worth all new Offers (if the Church is Disquieted and its Peace Endangered by them) though in themselves better; and it is better to labour under the infirmity of publick Order than the mischief of being without it, or, what is next to that, the Trial of some Form, seemingly of a better Cast and Mould that hath not yet been experimented. I say it again, Infirmity in a Church is better than Confusion, or Destruction, which is the Consequent of it: And I had rather choose that as I would a House, to have one with some Faults, rather then to have none at all; And if I cannot have them mended (when tolerable) I think my self bound not only to bear with them, but to do all I can for its preservation though with them, and to observe all things that are lawful for its support and encouragement. In doing thus I serve God, and his Church, my own Soul and the Souls of others; promote Religion and Charity in the World; *For God is not the Author of Confusion but of Peace in all the* ^{1 Cor. 14. 33.} Churches

Churches of the Saints. In things which neither we nor the Worship are the worse for, but the Church the better for observing Peace and Order is far to be preferred before Niceties : And certainly neither we nor the Service of God can be the worse for what God hath concluded nothing in. What the Gospel looks as is the Main and Essential parts of Religion in Doctrine, Worship and Practice. And if these be Secured, we are under no Obligation to contend for or against the modes and circumstances of things further than the Churches Order and Peace is concerned in them. So the Apostle,

Rom. 14. 16. *Let not your Good be Evil Spoken of: For the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghost; the promoting Love and Charity, and substantial Righteousness. He that in these things Serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of Men,* "The Beauty of the Kings Daughter is within," saith St. Austin, and all its observations are "but its vesture, which though various in different Churches, are no prejudice to the Common Faith, nor to him that useth them. And therefore what he and his mother received from St. Ambrose, and looked upon as a Divine Oracle, is worthy to be recommended to all, That in all things not contrary to Truth and good Manners, it becometh a Good and Prudent Christian to Practise according to the Custom of the Church where he comes; if he will not be a Scandal to them, nor have them to be a Scandal to him.

Aug. Epist.
86.

Epist. 118.
&c 86.

And if the Custom and Practice of a Church should be thus taken into consideration by a Good Man, then certainly much more ought it so to be, when that is Established, and is made a Law, and is backed by Authority : For then to stand in Opposition is not only an Offence but an Affront ; and to insist upon the Gratifying our own Inclination against publick Order, is to contend whether we or our Superiours shall Govern, whether

our

our Will or the publick Good and Order must take place. And what can be the Issue of such a Temper but the distraction if not Dissolution of Government; which as it cannot be without Governed as well as Governours, so cannot be preserved without the submission of the Governed in all lawful things to the Governours; and the permitting them to choose and determine in things of that kind as they shall see meet. Its pleaded *That there should be a Liberty left to Christians in things Undetermined in Scripture*; and such things indeed there are that Christians may have a Liberty in and yet hold Communion, as in Posture, &c. (though Decency Would plead for Uniformity in those things also) but there are other things which they must agree in, or else there can be no publick Worship or Christian Communion, which yet they differ in as much as the other. As now whether Worship is to be celebrated with or without a Form; whether the Lord's Supper is to be received in the Morning or Evening; whether Prayers should be long or short; &c. Now unless one of these disagreeing Parties doth Yield to the other; or there be a Power in Superiours and Guides to determine for them, and they are to submit to them in it, there will be nothing but confusion: And why Superiours may not then Command; and why Inferiours are not to obey in all things of the like kind; In Posture or Habit, as well as the time (above specified) and Forms, I understand not.

To conclude this, if we find any thing required or generally practised in a Church, that is not Forbidden in Scripture; or any thing Omitted or Forbidden in a Church, that is not required in Scripture; we may and ought to Act or to forbear as they that are of its Communion do generally Act or forbear, or the Laws of that Communion require; and in such things are to be determined.

mined by the publick Voice of the Communion, that is, Authority, Custom, or the Majority.

Object.

But to this it will be said, If we are thus to be determined in our Practice, then where is our Christian Liberty, which being only in Indifferent things, if we are restrained in the use of them, we are also restrained in our Liberty, which yet the Apostle exhorts Christians to *stand fast in*.

Gal. 5. 1.

Answer.

1. This is no argument to those that say there is nothing Indifferent in the Worship of God; for then there is nothing in it matter of Christian Liberty;

2. A restraint of our Liberty, or receding from it is of it self, no violation of it. All Persons grant this in the latter, and the most scrupulous are apt to plead that the Strong ought to bear with the Weak, and to give no Offence to them by indulging themselves in that Liberty which others are afraid to take. But now if a Person may recede from his Liberty, and yet is bound so to do in the case of Scandal, and yet his Liberty be not thereby infringed, why may it not be also little infringed, when restrained by others? How can it be supposed, that there should be so vast a difference betwixt restraint and restraint, and that he that is restrained by Authority should have his Liberty prejudiced, and yet he that is restrained *By anothers Conscience* (as the Apostle saith) should keep intire? And if it should be said this is Occasional, but the other is perpetuated by the Order, perhaps, of a Church. I answer, that all Orders about Indifferent things are but temporary, and are only intended to bind so long as they are for the good of the Community. And if they are for continuance, that alters not the case; For though the Apostle knew his own Liberty and where there was Just Reason could insist upon it, yet he did not suppose that could be damnified, though for his whole life it was restrained.

1 Cor. 10. 29.

restrain'd. For thus he resolves, *If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the World standeth*, which certainly he would not have condescended to, if such a Practice was not reconcileable to his Exhortation of *standing fast in that Liberty, &c.*

3. Therefore to find out the tendency of his Exhortation, its fit to understand what Christian Liberty is, and that is truly no other than the Liberty which Mankind naturally had, before it was restrain'd by particular Institution; and which is call'd Christian Liberty in opposition to the *Jews* which had it not under their Law, but were restrain'd from the Practice and use of things, otherwise and in themselves Lawful, by severe Prohibitions. Now as all the World was then divided into *Jews* and *Gentiles*, so the Liberty which the *Jews* were before denied, was call'd Christian, because by the coming of Christ, all these former restraints were taken off, and all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* did enjoy it. And therefore when the Apostle doth exhort them to *stand fast in it*, it was, as the Scope of the Epistle doth shew, to warn them against returning to that *Jewish* State, and against those who held it necessary for both *Jew* and *Gentile* still to observe all the Rites and Orders of it. Now if the Usages of a Church were of the same kind, or had the same tendency, or were alike necessarily impos'd as those of the *Mosaical* Law, then Christians would be concerned in the Apostles Exhortation; but where these reasons are not, our Liberty is not at all prejudiced by compliance with them. As long I say, as they are neither peccant in their Nature, nor End, nor Number, they are not unlawful to us, nor is our Liberty injur'd in the use of them. And so I am brought to the last General, which is,

V. That there is nothing required in our Church which

which is not either a duty in it self; and so necessary to all Christians, or else what is indifferent, and so may be lawfully used by them. By things required, I mean, such as are used in the Communion and Service of our Church, and imposed upon the Lay-members of it (for these are the things my Subject doth more especially respect.) This is a Subject too Copious for me to follow through all the particulars of it; and indeed it will be needless for me to enlarge upon it, if the foundation I have laid be good, and the Rules before given are fit measures for us to Judge of the lawfulness, or unlawfulness of things by; for by these we shall soon bring the Cause to an Issue. I think there is nothing to be charged upon our Church for being defective in any Essential part of Divine Worship (as the Church of *Rome* is in its Half-Communion) nor of any practice that is apparently inconsistent with, or that doth defeat the ends of any Institution (as the same Church doth offend by having its Service in an unknown Tongue, and in the multitudes of its Ceremonies). I think it will be acknowledged, that the Word of God is sincerely and freely Preached, the Sacraments intirely and truly Administred, the Prayers for matter inoffensive and good. And therefore the matter in dispute is about the Ministration of our Worship, and the manner of its performance; and I think the things of that kind Objected against, refer either to Time, or Forms, or Gesture. To Times, such are Festivals, or Days set apart for Divine Service; to Forms such are our Prayers, and the Administration of our Sacraments; to Gestures, as Standing up at the Creed or Gospels, and Kneeling at the Lord's Supper. But now all these are either Natural or Moral Circumstances of Action, and which, as I have shewed, are inseparable from it. Of the former kind are Days and Gestures; of the latter
are

are Forms of Administration, and so upon the reasons before given may be lawfully determined and used. Again, these are not forbidden by any Law, either expressly, or consequentially, and have nothing that is indecent, disorderly or unedifying in them; and which if any should engage his own opinion and experience in, he would be answered in the like kind, and have the opinions and experience of Thousands that live in the practice of these, to contradict him. And if there be nothing of this kind apparent, or what can be plainly prov'd, (as I am apt to beleive there cannot) then the Proposition I have laid down needs no further proof. But if at last it must issue in things inexpedient to Christians, or an unlawfulness in the imposition; are either of these fit to be insisted upon, when the peace of one of the best Churches in the World is broken by it, a lamentable Schism kept up, and our Religion brought into imminent hazard by both? Alas how near have we been to ruin, and I wish I had no reason to say, how near are we to it, considering the indefatigable industry, the united endeavours, the matchless policy of those that contrive and desire it! Can we think that we are safe, as long as there is such an abiding reason to make us suspect it, and that our divisions are both fomented, and made use of by them to destroy us? And if this be our danger, and Union as necessary as desirable, shall we yet make the breach wider, or irreparable by an obstinate contention? God forbid! *O pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee: Let Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces. Amen.*

T H E E N D.